

## CASS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD MEETING

January 4, 2016

### MINUTES

With quorum present, Vice Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 1:59.

**Present:** Ken Pawluk, Chad Peterson, Rick Steen, Brian Hagen

**Absent:** Arland Rasmussen, Mary Scherling

**Presenter:** Chip Ammerman, Director; Shelley Earsley, Eide Bailly; Joe Tillman, Eide Bailly

#### I. **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Pawluk asked for his request for Lutheran Social Services to limit the incoming number of refugees to 50% be reflected in the minutes from December 7, 2015.

Mr. Steen made a motion to approve the December 7, 2015 Board minutes as amended. Mr. Hagen seconded it. Motion carried.

#### II. **Economic Assistance Work Flow Study Update**

Mr. Ammerman referred to Shelley Earsley to provide an update on the Economic Assistance Work Flow Study Update. Ms. Earsley stated it has been approximately six months since the initial assessment where six main tasks were identified to be focused on. These areas include: Lobby Navigation Team/front end flow, limit length of incoming voicemails, implement scanning hardware, utilize shared electronic calendars, promote online applications and reviews, and establish consistent electronic annotations. She stated the biggest accomplishment this far was the formation of the Tech Team, who has created video tutorials to assist in consistencies within Economic Assistance, as well as additional technical support pertaining specifically to Eligibility Workers.

Most focuses will be implemented in the first quarter of 2016, including the implementation of Qnomy, LaserFiche and scanning hardware. Ms. Earsley stated metrics have been created for many of the topics, but there are some that will be more observation-based, rather than quantifiable. She stated the Economic Assistance Planning Committee struggled with timelines and metrics for some of the focuses due to that reason.

It was questioned whether the current hold on the remodel project for Economic Assistance will impact the implementation of the queuing system, Qnomy. Mr. Ammerman stated that it will not be necessary to have the remodeling project done in order to start Qnomy, but it would have been a great benefit if the remodeling were completed. Plans are in place to accommodate the remodel when Qnomy is installed in January 2016.

Ms. Earsley continued her presentation by reviewing the metrics of all six categories focused on in the last few months. These were developed by the Economic Assistance Planning Committee, and included current statistics and attainable goals set by the Committee.

Mr. Peterson questioned the 80% goal originally discussed regarding the use of online applications. Mr. Ammerman stated that as a federal requirement, the agency cannot limit how potential clients apply for assistance; all forms are to be accepted. Currently, the online application system has many flaws and the usability is not good for both clients and Eligibility Workers. Contact has been made with the State and they are working to address these issues.

Ms. Earsley concluded her presentation by stating there are 24 hours left on the agency's agreement with Eide Bailly. Follow-up and monitoring will now be turned over to the Economic Assistance Planning Committee to oversee. It was decided to use the remaining 24 hours for a review in July 2016, prior to the budget discussions. The reassessment portion of the contract will be completed in quarter four which will allow the upcoming initiatives to be in place for a period of time in order to determine whether efficiencies were gained.

**III. 2016 Purchase Service Agreements**

All service agreements for 2016 have been completed with the addition of agreements from PATH, Children's Consultation Network and The Consortium. Mr. Birch Burdick has reviewed and approved the agreements. Mr. Pawluk made a motion to approve the contracts. Mr. Steen seconded it. Motion carried. The contracts require Mr. Rasmussen's signature, which will be obtained when he returns.

**IV. Operating Report**

Mr. Ammerman stated the fourth quarter was busy agency-wide. Ms. Podoll identified additional community support from Amanda's Hope, who donated \$600 to those children in residential treatment, during the holiday season. An explanation of a permanency fund was requested. Ms. Podoll explained that permanency funds are used to assist children and families in a variety of ways, to include placement prevention and assistance with goals, safety, stabilization and/or reunification. Ms. Podoll explained 90% of the fund amount requested comes from the state, with the agency covering the additional 10%.

It was questioned what the unduplicated numbers in Economic Assistance were as they are no longer stated on the Statistical Report. Mr. Ammerman explained the agency lost the ability to collect those numbers unless each individual worker were to manually go in and physically tally individuals per family. In 2017, when there is one system utilized by Economic Assistance, the unduplicated numbers will be easily attained once again.

Mr. Peterson questioned whether donations of clothing to Social Services for children being placed in foster care would be tax-deductible and if not, how it could be made so. It was believed it would be, but Mr. Ammerman stated he would pursue with Mr. Burdick.

Mr. Peterson additionally asked that Social Services quantify the cost of service to refugees. He shared he will be asking this of other community agencies as well, in order to bring the information to the legislature. Mr. Ammerman stated he would be able to compile information such as the time a worker spends per case. However, he stated external sources, such as translator services would be more difficult due to those services not being separated with regards to refugees versus immigrants. Mr. Peterson stated there is no timeframe and would like this information as time permits.

**V. Adjournment**

Mr. Pawluk made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:10 pm. Mr. Steen seconded it. Motion carried.



Arland Rasmussen, Chair  
Cass County Social Services Board



Melissa Kain Varno, Recorder